

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier. Claims 1-21 are pending in this application.

Examiner Interview

On October 22, 2003, the Examiner and Applicants' representative (Paul S. Hunter) had a telephonic conference to discuss "second coupling mechanism" recited in the claims and whether this claim element is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,105,923 (Hynes). The Examiner indicated that Applicants should provide a response stating for the record (1) the difference between the claimed first and second coupling mechanisms and (2) what teachings are missing from Hynes.

Applicants thank the Examiner for his time and participation in this telephonic conference.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

On page 2 of the the Office Action, Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 9-10, 12-13, 16-18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,105,923 (Hynes). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Hynes does not disclose, suggest, or teach the claimed invention as recited in Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 9-10, 12-13, 16-18 and 20.

Claims 1-2, 4, and 6 recite:

a second coupling mechanism attached to the elongated member configured to removably couple the elongated member to a second imaging system.

Claims 9, 10, and 12-13 recite:

wherein the first end is configured to be coupled to a magnetic resonance imaging device and the second end is configured to be coupled to an X-ray imaging device.

Claim 16-18 and 20 recite:

a first end compatible with a first coupling arrangement on an imaging system and a second end compatible with a second coupling arrangement on a second imaging system.

Applicants' present application provides the following description of the "second coupling mechanism" recited by Claims 1-2, 4, and 6 and the "second end" recited by Claims 9, 10, 12-13, 16-18, and 20:

[0027] Patient cradle 220 is latched to patient transport table 210 when moving the patient or object of interest. One end of patient transport table 210 docks with MR system 110 and the other end of patient transport table 210 docks with x-ray pedestal 230. Patient cradle 220 can be configured to be compatible with both MR and x-ray imaging systems and is capable of supporting a cantilevered patient load in the x-ray setting. Patient cradle 220 can be made of a KEVLARTM material or some other type of aramid fiber material or shielding material.

(Emphasis added.)

With reference to the Figures of Applicants' present application, Fig. 2 clearly shows that at the MR magnet 110 the patient cradle 220 couples to patient transport table 210 at an end opposite workspace 224. In the x-ray room, however, the patient cradle 220 couples with an x-ray pedestal 230 at the workspace end.

Hynes shows a cart 20 having a head rest assembly 44 with a ball 42 that engages a ball clamping assembly 40. (See Hynes, Fig. 1 and Col. 8, lines 19-41.) The cart 20 is used for x-raying a patient. Hynes only discloses an x-ray system. There is no mention or suggestion of a second imaging system. Indeed, not only does Hynes not describe a "second coupling mechanism," but Hynes also fails to disclose or suggest "magnetic imaging system" (Claims 9, 10, and 12-13) or a "second imaging system" (Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 16-18 and 20).

Hynes fails to disclose, suggest, or teach the claimed invention recited in Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 9-10, 12-13, 16-18 and 20. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of these claims under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) based on Hynes.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

On page 5 of the Office Action, Claims 7 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hynes, in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,145,612 (Cooper). Applicants traverse the rejection. Neither Hynes nor Cooper (alone or in combination), disclose, suggest, or teach the claimed invention as recited in Claims 7 and 11.

As discussed above, Hynes fails to disclose, suggest, or teach the claimed invention as recited in claims 1 or 9. Claim 7 depends from claim 1 and claim 11 depends from claim 9. Cooper does not provide the missing teachings. Cooper only describes an elongated member comprised of Kevlar. As such, a rejection of claims 7 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on Hynes and Cooper cannot properly be maintained. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 5 of the Office Action, claims 3 and 19 are allowed.

Also on page 5 of the Office Action, claims 5, 8, 14-15, and 21 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. In light of the remarks above, Applicants do not believe that the claims from which claims 5, 8, 14-15, and 21 depend are properly rejected. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to claims 5, 8, 14-15, and 21.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

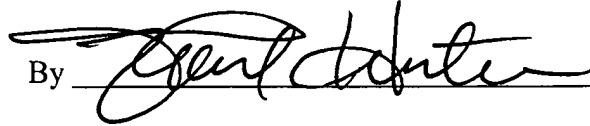
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-0845. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit

Account No. 07-0845. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 07-0845.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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